

James L. Miller
11231 Ridge Road
Renovo, PA 17764
February 5, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo:

Joseph Kurowski is my sister Sue's oldest son, and my nephew. I have known Joey all of his life and I watched him grow up from a baby, through childhood, and into adulthood. Joey has always been a gentle, courteous and loving person. His younger brothers adore him and he has always been protective and supportive of both of them. They have their moments where they aggravate each other as you would expect brothers to do, but they respect and love each other, and Joey has always been there for them when they needed him. Joey was very supportive and affectionate to my mother when she was alive; he would help her with yardwork, repairs, shoveling snow and stay with her to keep her company when she was lonely. I was always very appreciative of his kindness towards his grandmother (Baba), especially when he was older and I knew there were other things he would rather be doing than to be hanging out with his grandmother. Joey is very close with his family and I always look forward when they would visit me for vacations. He would help me with any projects I would have, usually yardwork, setting up games for the kids, cooking on the grill, clean up and mostly keep an eye on his younger brothers and cousins when we would have a camp fire or go swimming. I would always enjoy hearing about his progress in school and later college and I was very proud when he graduated from the University of Buffalo. Joey was the first one of my nephews/nieces to graduate from a four year college. He was excited about his job at GEICO and loved to talk about his work.

I was shocked and disheartened when I learned that Joey was charged with possession of child pornography. I didn't believe it at first. Joey is outgoing, funny and kind around family but has been shy and reserved around others, but has always been obedient and respectful. When I first met with Joey after he was charged, he was embarrassed, remorseful and despondent but he was honest about what he had done. Joey's demeanor was shattered and the seriousness of the charges overwhelmed him and he was afflicted with guilt. I was concerned for his health and even more fearful of his state of depression. When Joey was formally sentenced, he was sent to jail until he could be released on bail. My sister, brother in-law and Joey's brothers were in tears and terrified

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of what might happen to him. I did my best to be supportive and calm but I didn't sleep until Joey was released. Prison would be frightening for anyone but I couldn't imagine someone as naive and gentle as Joey surviving in prison.

Since then, Joey has remained remorseful, sullen and depressed. He lost his job that he loved and his independence. The shame of what he has done still weighs heavy on him and he understands the consequences of his actions. He understands that I don't condone what he did but I hope he understands that I am proud that he has sought out professional help beyond what was offered by the court, he recognizes the seriousness of what he has done and that it is wrong, he admitted what he has done and is willing to face the consequences. I hope he knows how much his family and I love him and will support him any way we can. He understands what he has done is wrong but he has a lifetime to learn from this and make up for his mistake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Miller", written in a cursive style.

James L. Miller

Blair Sailer
1466 North Creek Road
Lakeview, NY 14085
February 2, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

I understand that Joseph Kurowski has pleaded guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. This is his first offense which is being handled by the Federal Court. My name is Blair Sailer and I am a friend and former classmate of Joseph. I have been providing him support since the beginning of this situation and I will continue to do so.

I met Joseph about four years ago in my sophomore year at the University at Buffalo, where we both attended as Music Performance Majors. I am a shy person and Joseph made me feel welcome in the program and also helped me to introduce myself to our other classmates and to make friends. Joseph is such a great friend, he always goes out of his way to make everyone happy. I know that I can always count on Joseph to be there for me. Throughout the years that I have known him, he has helped me through difficult times and also celebrated my accomplishments. He was also very involved in his church where he sang in the choir for many years.

It has been a very difficult time for Joseph since the charge. He had recently graduated with a Bachelor's Degree and was working at a job in which he greatly enjoyed. He planned everything out and was making good progress on paying off his student loans. However, since he got terminated from employment, his loss of wages makes him unable to pay off the rest of his student loans. He is also losing sight of the goals that he had planned to do with his Bachelor's Degree.

Joseph tried his best to be a positive and happy person, however he was battling depression and anxiety issues along with being diagnosed with narcolepsy. These issues can be very hard to overcome and, at times, can seem overwhelming. Perhaps because of these feelings, Joseph turned to online interaction to seek comfort. I know that Joseph never had any intention of deceiving anyone. He did not lie about who he was and was always true about himself. Joseph never had any ill intentions and I know that he will do so much good in the world after all of this is over.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blair Sailer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Blair Sailer

Wanda Chomicka
25 The Spur
Williamsville, NY 14221

February 3, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Judge Vilardo,

I am writing to you to provide a letter of reference for Joseph Kurowski. I understand that Joseph Kurowski has plead guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. This is a first offense. The Western District Federal Court is handling the case.

My name is Wanda Chomicka. I have known Joseph for 4 years. He was a friend of my daughters Maria and Klara at the University at Buffalo. When my daughter Maria transferred from Texas to UB during her sophomore year, Joe became one of her first friends. He was generous and kind; for example, he referred Maria for a good job at Lowe's when he was working there. He also helped her get a seasonal job as a carillon player in the church where he was singing, as well as several jobs at UB for various events. Joe has a big heart and frequently helped with anything he could: for example, helping move things or helping make dinner.

Joe was a frequent visitor at our house, where several student friends would meet to eat dinner, practice music together, sing, and play board games. Joe also invited my husband and me to his graduation recital at Calvary Episcopal Church. My daughters, several friends, family members, and church members helped him organize the event. The event drew many people from several communities he was a crucial part of. Joe was quick to publicly acknowledge people that helped him and thanked them for their support during his college career.

Throughout the past several years, I have seen Joseph interacting with many people. He was always respectful and kind towards them. For example, one evening, I saw Joseph helping one of my daughter's friends in her job search. He was explaining different career paths and ways of discerning her skills, based on methods he learned at his job at Geico. I was quite surprised to learn about his offense. I cannot explain his motives other than juvenile recklessness. From what I know, Joseph takes his situation seriously. I know the period of house arrest and inability to go online affects his employment and employment prospects. He still tries to do a job search by conventional means, as he is concerned about the finances and the burden he has become for his family. I will continue to provide ongoing support to Joe throughout this time.

Sincerely,

Wanda Chomicka

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United State District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor:

My name is Heather Cooper; I reside at 26 Linwood Avenue, North Tonawanda, NY 14120. I am currently the Director of Human Resources for the Division of Athletics at the State University of New York at Buffalo. In my position, I have interacted with Joseph Kurowski for the past five years, as he has worked as a Student Assistant for the Division of Athletics. During Joseph's employment, he would assist patrons of the University during games and events. Joseph was always the first to assist when an issue would arise and would assist other students during hectic times during game day operations. One situation that I can speak of is when Joseph was working with a student with disabilities and he was the first to assist that student with finding the correct way to their work station and assuring that the student had everything that they needed prior to going to his own work station. With today's generation, very few students would display the type of caring and understanding that Joseph displays. When working with students Joseph demonstrated the same respect his co-workers that he would for any one. He always went the extra mile to assist a patron that needed anything. He has displayed a caring and respectful demeanor for all of the patrons that attend any UB event or game. My interactions with Joseph have always been conducted in a professional manor and he has the up most respect for anyone that he comes into contact with.

I understand the Joseph has accepted responsibility for his actions and knows that they were wrong. I understand as well that the actions that Joseph have done are illegal. I want to share that I have never witnessed Joseph do anything illegal or against the Division of Athletics, University at Buffalo policies, or NCAA rules and regulations, during his employment with the University of New York at Buffalo.

Thank you for your consideration.



Heather Cooper
26 Linwood Avenue
North Tonawanda, NY 14120

10834 Keller Road
Clarence, NY 14031
716 741 4258

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

I understand that Joseph Kurowski has pleaded guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography, a case that is being handled by the Western District Federal Court. My name is Jean Kopperud and I am a professional classical clarinet player and tenured professor at the University at Buffalo. I had Joe as a student in my class On the Edge, a course to practice performing, for three semesters. This is a small class of 12 to 18 students who are working on learning how to communicate with an audience and be comfortable on stage. They work on everything that is in between them and being 100 percent of the best they can be. Joe made huge progress during those three semesters as a singer. He was hard working and very supportive of his classmates. We work on attitude, attention and awareness and Joe did very well in the class both as a performer and as a supportive class member.

I also had Joe for one semester as a private clarinet student. Although this was a secondary instrument for him, he did well on the clarinet and learned a great deal. He was on time, responsible and takes direction and criticism well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Kopperud', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jean Kopperud
Professor of Music
University at Buffalo

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February 9, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo

United States District Judge

Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse

2 Niagra Square

Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo,

I am writing in support of Joseph Kurowski, who was a student of mine at the University at Buffalo for 3 years, up until 2 years ago. I understand that he has pleaded guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. I knew him in a number of capacities. He not only sang in my choir, but was its president. I appointed him president because of his diligence, his reliability, and his organizational skills. I needed someone with whom I could work well with, and who could be a wise liaison between me and the students. He handled that responsibility perfectly.

He also took a conducting course with me, and worked very hard to improve his skills.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, he took a course with me, along with 2 other students, in which he learned about the running of an arts organization (which I run in NYC). He not only did very well, but I used his skills constantly to benefit my organization. He was always thinking beyond the scope of what I had envisioned, and was quite creative and skillful at solving both technical problems and routine ones. I counted on him to do important work for me, and he exceeded my expectations constantly. He also worked constantly and very well as a team member in that course.

Joseph is a gentle, sensitive, caring young man who will go far in life. I hope, your honor, that you will be lenient with him. He can contribute much to society. I believe that he has been punished enough, being fired from his job, which affects his ability to pay off student loans.

Thank you,


Dr. Harold Rosenbaum

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WWW.CANTICUMNOVUM.ORG

SINGERS

Robert J. Kurowski
233 Bright Street
Cheektowaga, NY 14206
(716) 891-9347
February 6, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

My name is Robert Kurowski and I am writing this letter is in support of my son, Joseph Kurowski. I am well aware that Joseph has plead guilty of possession of child pornography. I was very upset to learn of this and am confused as this is not typical of my son and how he interacts with people.

Joseph and I have never had a close, loving relationship, however, I love him very much, I just have a hard time expressing my emotions. My son is an intelligent, quiet, dignified individual. He has always been the type of person who worried about everything. His interests differed from mine, which caused us to not be as close as I would have liked. I was, however, extremely proud of him and his accomplishments throughout his life. He was a good student, he was heavily involved in music and musical theatre type activities. I attended all of his performances through high school, always having a proud dad moment as he sang, both with the chorus and especially during his solos. He was part of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and a section leader at Calvery Episcopal Church. He is a very talented singer.

As Joseph approached college, he began to mature and, as he did, of course he wanted to be more and more independent. His mother and I were financially unable to help him pay his tuition, but told him we could help by having him live at home and we'd pay his car insurance until he paid off his student loans. Once he did that, we'd see where he was in his career and go from there. I believe, even more so than his mother, that all our kids should have responsibilities around the house, regardless of other things (like school, work, etc). Joseph always had part time jobs and was extremely good about paying his bills on time and saving money to purchase a vehicle.

Joseph and I have very strong opinions on topics, which lead to us butting heads at times, but I admired the fact that he has a big heart and is determined to succeed at everything he puts his mind to. As my mother-in-laws health decreased, and my wife began dedicating every free moment to her care, I became very heavily involved with our younger children as they needed

rides to/from school, sporting activities and making sure their day to day needs were met. I wanted them to have as much normalcy in their daily routines as possible while their mom was absent. Our thought was that Joseph was old enough to attend to himself, however, I did begin to notice a change in his demeanor. He was withdrawn, and sad at times and then other days he would be his "normal" self. It was a tough period for all of us as we were all very close to my mother-in-law and looking back, it was if we were just going through the motions, but sadness and tensions were high as we dealt with the dramatic decline in her health and the reality that she needed my wife which caused a huge hole in our lives.

I was extremely proud of Joseph as he graduated from the University at Buffalo in May of 2015. He worked hard to finish his bachelors degree in four years and that hard work and determination paid off. Not long after graduation, he got a full time job at GEICO selling home-owners insurance. As he always does, he put 100 percent effort into the position and was doing well, exceeding expectations.

The past year, and more particularly the last ten months have been extremely hard. I am home with my son all day and it is difficult to see him try to deal with this situation. He shows great remorse for his actions and accepts responsibility for it. He was relieved of his position at GEICO in December and was devastated. He has been applying for other positions since late Spring of 2016, however, has been unsuccessful due to the charges against him. This has caused him to become very depressed and become worried about being able to pay off his student loans. He is saddened that he has become so dependent on us and unable to help with simple things such as shoveling the driveway, helping with lawn care or helping his grandmother. His self-esteem has dropped even lower than it has in the past as he feels he has eliminated any chance of holding a job where his learned skills and knowledge will be utilized to the fullest capacity. We have been talking more now than we ever have before and I can assure you that I will be there for him, no matter what the outcome of this is. He is a good person who hopefully will be able to reenter society and succeed in the future. I firmly believe that the therapy that he has been receiving has helped tremendously and know that continuation of that professional help will enable him to work through this and bring him back to where he can be the confident, hard-working, go getter that we know him to be.

Sincerely,

Robert Kurowski



Megan K Prunty
240 Reist Street
Williamsville, NY 14221

February 6, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

My name is Megan Prunty. I am the Assistant Athletic Director of Equipment at the University at Buffalo. I am writing to you in support of Joseph Kurowski. I understand that Joseph has pled guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography and that this is his first offense.

I have had the pleasure of working with Joey's mother since 2005. Therefore, I had heard about him and his family before I actually met him. Joey first came into my daily life when he came to work for me as a student assistant in 2011, which was his freshman year at the University at Buffalo. I remember my first impression being he wouldn't last in my employ. I didn't mean that against him. I just knew the look of someone who had chosen a position that didn't suit him. As an athletic equipment manager, I work largely with the University's football team. In this capacity, I hire students to work practices as student managers. This is a fairly demanding role for a student. The time commitment of 12-15 hours per week can be significant for a new student. On top of that, managers have to get right in the trenches and work directly with the coaches and the athletes. Sometimes, this can lead to being run down, tackled, yelled at and generally treated like a football player. From what I would come to know about Joey, the first thing was that he didn't know anything about football.

Joey was noticeably out of sorts in nearly every aspect of football practice. He was often seen running after footballs that he had failed to handle correctly on the first attempt. Coaches, players, and his fellow student managers picked up quickly on Joey's lack of athletic prowess. He was often the subject of a good natured ribbing. As I looked on, I wondered when Joey would fail to appear for the next day's practice. The answer surprised me. He didn't stop until the last day of the season.

I spend the majority of my day working with college aged people. I have come to find many in this age group as not all together reliable or responsible. I had come to expect the average student worker to just stop showing up, or have a list of excuses of why something couldn't be done. Joey surprised me and not just by spending the whole season in a job that I am sure made him uncomfortable. He stood by his commitment and did his best to fulfill all obligations of the role. I found it to be a rare quality, and still do, in a person so young.

Beyond Joey's honoring his commitment, I was impressed by his attitude and ability to risk failure. He won, not only my respect, but others for simply having the integrity to finish when it would have been more comfortable to quit. I enjoy getting to know the students that work for me and Joey is certainly one that I remember fondly. Even after he finished working for me, it was always a pleasure to see him.

Over the years, I have continued to know Joey through working with his mother. As all proud parents do, she would relay information on how Joey was doing and how he was handling the evolution from college student, to college graduate, to working adult. I knew that he had earned himself a full time job at Geico and that he was taking pride in buying himself a car and making inroads on paying off his student loans. I am sure that these are accomplishments he still looks forward to.

I understand the gravity of what Joey has plead guilty to. I also have seen a smart, caring, and conscientious young man who has much potential. I believe Joey has a solid foundation and a loving family which will help him as he moves forward in life. Personally, not only did I have no hesitation about writing this letter of support, I would freely offer Joey any assistance should it be warranted in the future.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Megan K Prunty', with a stylized, flowing script.

Megan K Prunty

Klara Chomicka
25 The Spur
Williamsville, NY 14221

February 5, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

I understand that Joseph Kurowski has plead guilty to the possession of child pornography.

I met Joe through my twin sister, Maria, in 2012. He was a good friend of my sister's, so I met him soon after Maria did and we would all spend time together regularly. My first impression of Joe was that he was welcoming, friendly, and kind. The first few years, when we were both enrolled at UB, we would often meet to do homework, get coffee, or eat dinner together. After graduation, we saw each other less frequently and I was surprised to hear of what happened last April.

Joe became my friend through my sister. She spoke of him often, as her first friend who became her link to new friends. This is a role that Joe has played for many of his friends, as he tries really hard to bring people together and establish a support network for his friends. As an introvert at UB, I was overwhelmed by the huge number of students and found it hard to meet people. When my sister and Joe formed a friend group within the music department, Joe was the one to reach out to me and welcome me into their group. I have always appreciated how he made me feel welcome and gave me the confidence to make new friends. Even though I wasn't in class with them and missed out on their shared experiences, Joe made me feel like an equal part of their group.

Over the years, Joe has supported and helped me through a lot. We worked at retail jobs down the plaza from each other for a while. He knew I hated my retail job, so he would visit me at work on his breaks or after work to make me smile and laugh. His visits meant a lot to me, often turning a bad day around by listening to me vent and offering positive advice. He became a friend that I could rely on for anything - whether it was doing Italian homework together, running errands with me, giving me a ride, or just singing Disney songs by the piano. In the everyday ways that make a good friend, Joe was always there for me.

In 2015, my sister and I were alone for Christmas, since our parents had gone to Poland to be with our grandparents. I was feeling sad about being left by the rest of our family for the most important holiday of the year, but Joe reached out to us and invited us to spend the day with his family. On a day that is meant to be spent with family, our friends all had their own traditions

and plans. Joe could have not noticed that we didn't have anyone to spend it with. However, realizing that we would be alone for the holiday, he welcomed us into his family. It turned a potentially sad day into a joyous occasion. This past year, our parents again were gone for Christmas, and Joe welcomed us again into his home, eager to share his joy and love with his friends. Joe looks out for his friends, making sure that wherever they are, they feel welcomed and know that they have his support.

As I got to know Joe better, I learned that he was strong in support of his friends, but he had his own troubles. He has struggled with depression and anxiety over the years I've known him. These issues may have been set aside as he spent all of his energy trying to succeed and advance at school and work. He made efforts to get help for these problems while he was in school, but the scheduling for counseling services didn't work out. From our conversations, I gathered that he was also worried about the stigma that our society gives to someone who goes to therapy. After graduating from UB in 2014, we weren't in touch as regularly as before. As our friends drifted off in separate directions, I think Joe sought out a new community through video games and online interaction, which led to his accidental contact with minors. Depression, especially when it involves suicidal ideation, overwhelms your life and clouds your entire thinking. The fatigue and hopelessness that comes from depression, combined with the exhaustion from his narcolepsy, must have been incredibly difficult to handle. I wish that he had been able to get mental health counseling when he most needed it.

I know that Joe never meant to hurt anyone. In seeking interaction with strangers, I think that he was looking for support or comfort to escape the overwhelming presence of depression and anxiety. Since April, he has been laid off from his job at Geico, where he had been very successful. He now applies for new jobs every week. He has gotten medication and therapy which have helped him immensely. He has become a more self-assured person and continues to learn, working through business school books every day to expand his future job options.

Joe regrets what he did and wants to move forward with his life. He has a lot to contribute to society through his hard work, loyalty, and determination. If society is meant to benefit from sending a person to jail, I don't believe that this is the case here. A prison sentence would be detrimental to Joe, to his family and friends, and the community. This charge has accrued thousands of dollars in debt for him, which he hopes to pay off through future employment. He has already made significant improvements since last April and would have a lot to offer as an employed member of society. He has supported me and so many people, especially his younger brothers, over the years, and I can only hope that I can repay that support in any way. I hope that you would give him a second chance and see the good that he can do for other people.

Respectfully yours,

Klara Chomicka
Klara Chomicka

Maria Chomicka
25 The Spur
Williamsville, NY 14221

February 3, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Judge Vilardo,

I am writing to you to provide a letter of reference for Joseph Kurowski. I understand that Joe Kurowski has plead guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. This is a first offense. The Western District Federal Court is handling the case.

My name is Maria Chomicka and I have been friends with Joe Kurowski for five years. We met at the University at Buffalo, where we both studied Music. At the time we met, I was a new transfer student and was having a difficult time adjusting to everything: the new classes, professors, classmates, and the huge size of the campus. I'm a rather introverted person and it takes me a while to open up to people. Joe was the first person at UB to reach out and befriend me. We became friends and spent much time together in our music classes and outside of them. We worked on homework and studied together, as well as performing together for recitals and classes. Joe helped me become a better musician, in all of the countless hours we spent practicing and working on new songs together. When I was stressing out while preparing for recitals and concerts, I could count on him to support me. He would come and be my test audience before performances, as well as often helping me out during concerts by turning pages for me or warming up with me. He truly put his friends first and was the first to help when someone needed help. Joe also was crucial in helping me discover my path as a church musician. When I was looking for an organ teacher, he connected me with his choir director from Calvary Episcopal, who became my first organ teacher. I learned much from him and now, I am a full-time Music Director at a local church. I also saw how dedicated and committed Joe was to his church community at Calvary. He sang in the church choir and was well loved by the parishioners. They supported him and offered him a place to perform a solo vocal recital, where many came and were touched by his talent and giftedness as a musician.

Joe also helped me become a better person, by inviting me to open up and share my thoughts and opinions with others (both in classes and outside of them). I also worked with Joe at Lowe's in their Customer Service department for over a year. He suggested that I apply and helped me get in touch with their hiring manager. After I was hired, he was a very helpful and knowledgeable guide, especially in the first few months of training. I often would ask Joe questions about how to do something or how to fix something that I messed up, and he would gladly help me. I also

remember how easy it was for him to connect with customers and make them laugh or smile, even in just a minute or two it took to cash them out.

Moreover, I saw Joe's care and kindness in how he treated my family and friends. Often, he would come over to my parent's house and help us make dinner, or entertain us afterwards by singing songs. One evening, he spent several hours talking with my friend Melinda, helping her figure out her career path. He walked her through the process of identifying her skills and setting goals for herself. He truly cared for each of his friends and would do anything he could to help them succeed and become happier.

On the outside, it looked like Joe was a very joyful and happy person, as he was always making jokes and easy to talk to. But as we became better friends and shared more with each other, I saw that he was clearly hurting, emotionally and mentally. He was depressed and anxious about many things. One time, he was so overcome with anxiety that he walked out during the middle of an exam. Several times, I suggested to him that he seek the help of a counselor or psychologist. I told him that I would help him set up the appointment and go with him. He was wary of going, because he didn't want to talk to a stranger about his problems. But one day, when he was at a very low point, he finally agreed and called UB's Student Counseling services. Unfortunately, they were swamped with appointments and wouldn't be able to see him for several weeks, so he didn't make the appointment. I wish he would have. I'm not an expert in psychology, but I have experienced depression myself and seen friends and family struggle with it as well. I was very concerned about his wellbeing and the way he talked. He showed high levels of anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of energy and motivation to do anything, and often spoke about family issues he was having. But I couldn't make him go and though several of our friends also encouraged him to seek help, nothing came of it at the time.

I now know that during his lowest and most depressed period, he was looking for something to distract him or help him – through various dating apps and texting people. When I first heard about his charges, I was shocked and very surprised. It didn't seem to match the Joe Kurowski that I knew and had been friends with for so long. I think that he was looking for connections with the wrong people in the wrong places. His unbalanced mental state at the time may have prevented him from properly thinking through what he was doing and seeing the long-term consequences. I'm still in touch with Joe and visit him at his house regularly (about once a week or so). Even in the midst of this difficult situation, he still is the same kind and caring friend that he always was. He often tells me and several friends that he is always here for us – and only a phone call or short drive away. He gladly listens to us ramble about our stressful lives or helps us laugh after a tough day. I am truly blessed by Joe's friendship and kind heart. I've personally seen how much he contributes to each community he is a part of – whether it be at work, school, church, or amongst friends – and I know that he has a lot more to offer.

Sincerely,


Maria Chomicka



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Music
Student Programs Office

February 9, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

I know Joseph Kurowski because he was one of my advisees from 2012 until he graduated with his bachelor's degree in 2015. My name is Karen Sausner and I am an advisor in the Department of Music at the University at Buffalo. I understand that Joe has pled guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography and that it is his first offense being handled in the Western District Federal Court.

During Joe's time here at UB I got to know him and some of his circle of friends of mostly music students and it was easy to see he was an important member in this group. I often heard about Joe planning a game night or a performance for everyone to go to. One time he and I arranged a pizza and pop movie party and invited faculty and students to come and watch "Frozen" because of its outstanding musical numbers. Joe was the one who planned it all, followed through and had the movie ready to go and we all had a good time.

I want to be very clear that I think Joe is a good, decent, hardworking, funny and compassionate person and that I will continue to support him infinitely. To save money he lived at home while in college and always had a part time job. We have had many conversations and it is clear he is very family oriented and was always telling some funny anecdote about one family member or another. Joe has two brothers that are quite a bit younger than him and I remember thinking what a nice older brother he was when he told me that it was one of his younger brother's birthday so that night Joe was going to play whatever game his brother wanted to.

Through our talks I know Joe is interested in many different things and I have often told him he should go into business because he has great interpersonal skills and is a born problem solver. For instance, Joe found himself falling asleep in classes and went for numerous sleep studies and was diagnosed with narcolepsy. He then took the steps he needed to overcome the symptoms because his classwork was suffering. Another time, Joe was no longer able to take voice lessons on campus due to faculty changes so he signed up for a performance class instead so that he could sing every week, as well as singing in the UB Choir and at his church.

(Con'd) Page 2

Since Joe has graduated we have kept in touch, mostly through his visiting my office every few weeks just to say hello. When those visits dropped off I became concerned and learned what had happened. This last November Joe got permission to come to campus and speak to me in person and I think that took a lot of courage. He had to tell me what had happened and asked if I would write a letter for him. He told me about battling depression and contemplating suicide while being housebound for over a year. He told me about the week he spent in jail and what a harrowing experience it was. He couldn't go to any relative's homes for the holidays because younger children would be about and that was very terribly upsetting to him. Clearly he was being so brave but feeling like the world had turned upside down on him and he had no control over it.

When asked if I have any idea to what led Joe to commit this offense I would have to say no, I have no idea. I also would say that as a mother of three twenty somethings myself I feel that with the way social media is today and the judgement calls that young people have to make, often without the wisdom and maturity that doesn't come until later that this situation could have happened to anyone. And what a tough lesson learned.

In the 13 years I have been here I have seen undergraduates come and go and for me Joe was one of those rare standout students whom I not only enjoyed interacting with but also watched him grow from a teenager to a graduate. He always seems to have his eye on the horizon and is figuring out how to get there. Even now he is seeing a counselor every week and takes it very seriously to help himself get through this ordeal. We talk on the phone from time to time and I'm always happy to hear his voice. I look forward to him being able to put this period of his life behind him as best he can and continue to move forward as a conscientious, contributing member of society.

If I can provide any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Karen Sausner
Director of Student Programs
University at Buffalo
Department of Music

Daniel Miller
10 Colette Avenue
Cheektowaga, NY 14227
February 7, 2017


Honorable Lawrence J. Vilaro
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

I understand that Joseph Kurowski has plead guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. I am his Uncle and Godfather and have known him his whole life. Growing up, Joseph always strived to do his best whether it was his grades in school, playing the clarinet in the school band, singing in the school choir or acting in a school play. Outside of school, Joseph was very caring to others. At family gatherings, he would always make sure that the younger kids would have fun and win whatever game they were playing. He would also take the time to help them learn and understand the game with great patience. Joseph was always willing to drop what he was doing to lend a helping hand whether it was a computer problem or even to babysit my kids or help out at his Grandmothers house with cutting the lawn or shoveling the driveway. You could tell how proud Joseph was about the jobs he has had by the way he would talk about them. He is very upset that, due to the nature of his crime, he is finding it hard to find someone to hire him.

Regardless of the outcome of his situation, my family and I will continue to support him in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Daniel Miller', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Daniel Miller

Denise Coughlin
1609 Poland Hill Road
Attica, NY 14011
February 1, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202
RE: Joseph Kurowski

Your Honor,

I am writing to you regarding Joseph Kurowski. My name is Denise Coughlin and I am a friend of Joseph and his family. I have known him his whole life. I have been invited to the Kurowski home for 25+ years. When Joseph was born, I came to his baptism and watched him grow his 24 years so far. Joseph's mother and I have been friends since high school. Whenever I see Joseph he is very polite and engages me in conversation, whether it be about work, school (when he was in college), cars, sports or family.

Most recently, I understand that Joseph Kurowski has plead guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. This is his first offense and is being handled in the Western District Federal Court. I have seen ups for Joseph. He is a wonderful singer and lights up when he talks about his singing. I've seen the downs too, like when his Grandmother was sick and passed away. Joseph was the third oldest grandchild and extremely close to his Grandmother. I know that was a very difficult time for him.

Since the above charge, I have been trying to help Joseph get a job. I work in a Human Resources office for a manufacturer and know the difficulties Joseph will have passing a background check. Joseph is struggling getting a job. He does well in interviews, but when he has to state his charge, companies don't hire him. His unemployment has run out and without a job, he will have a very difficult time paying back his student loans and keeping up with bills. I will continue to help him find a job and support him in any way that I can.

Joseph and his family have been a part of my life for a very long time and I cherish our friendship, they are more like family to me. I hope that this letter will show that, while he has taken responsibility for his actions, this was not something that was typical of him, nor have I ever witnessed this type of behavior from him. I ask that you consider this when sentencing him. Thank you for your time and consideration of my letter.

Thank you,

Denise Coughlin

Helen Kurowski
70 Marylou Lane
Depew, NY 14043
(716) 683-3262
February 2, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilaro
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

Joseph Kurowski is my grandson. I've known him for 24 years. Joey used to stay the weekends with my husband and myself since he was about ten years old. When my son (Joey's uncle) passed away, Joey was there for us, spending weekends and the summer. He would go with us to visit and help fix the grave. When his grandfather died two years later, I was left alone and Joey spent as much time with me, helping me get through the rough times. Joey would go shopping with me. We would have lunch and dinner together. He would call me and let me know how his day was at work. Before he would go for choir practice, he would stop off and have dinner with me. He was always ready and willing to do things for me. For many years, Joey has gone on vacation with my oldest son (Joey's Uncle Ricky), his Aunt Dawne, his cousin Torrie and myself. Torrie loves him very much and misses him a lot. Joey is a very smart and hardworking individual.

I am aware of the charge of possession of child pornography that he has plead guilty to. I have seen how he interacts with people of all ages and was shocked and completely taken by surprise as that is so out of character for him. I know he takes responsibility for what he has done as we have had conversations over the last nine months. I am 75 years old and I love him very much. I miss him, the things we used to do, the talks we would have and the help I received from him. Joey is kind, considerate and trustworthy. I hope that my vision of who my grandson is will show you what he is truly like as you consider his sentence.

Thank you.

Helen Kurowski

February 2, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor,

This letter is written with regards to Joseph Kurowski, son of my husband's brother, and our nephew. My husband, Rodney, and I have been together for eighteen years. I have known Joey for this entire time and have always had a special relationship with him. I understand the charges brought against him and am shocked as that is not how he conducts himself.

Joey had always been a very kind and caring young man. For example, when visiting my families summer home, Joey was always the first to help, when help was needed. Joe is an excellent tennis player and has patiently taught not only his little brothers, but me, his aunt, how to play a better game.

Joey is extremely close to his grandmother. When his grandfather passed away, he would spend every weekend with his grandmother so she wasn't alone. Joey took his grandmother shopping, they went to church together and would have their meals together.

Joey is a talented vocalist who sang with the Calvary Church choir. His social life has always revolved around his family, the choir and the church. At one point, he was planning on studying with a professional vocalist in New York City, using his vacation time from work and staying with my mother during this time. Joey's aspiration was to someday be a cantor and work with a church choir.

Joey was an above average student in both high school and college and lived at home throughout those years. He has much love and respect for his mother, father and two brothers, as well as his extended family. Joey is also very loyal to his friends, some of whom he has had for many years.

I love Joey and spending time with him. He is an integral part of our family.

Respectfully yours,

Molly Kurowski

February 10, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Joseph Kurowski

Your Honor,

This is a letter of character for Mr. Joseph Kurowski. I have know Joseph for approximately four years. Currently, I am Rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Batavia, NY. I met Joseph when I was serving as Assistant Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in Williamsville, New York. Joseph was hired by our choir director to serve as a section leader in our parish choir. Within a few months of his coming to Calvary Joseph was a valued member, not only of the choir, but of the church family. He took part in parish activities and lent his time and hard work to various parish activities.

Over these years, Joseph and I had many opportunities to talk about many subjects—life, faith, family, school and career aspirations. Joseph is the age of my older son, and I soon felt a connection to him as parent. Not in anyway to overshadow the role of his parents in his life, but I believe that he came to value my friendship, support and advice. I have valued his compassion, honesty and insight.

Over the years that I have known him we have developed a close friendship and pastoral relationship. I have found him consistently to be caring, loving and very loyal to friends and family. I truly believe that he does not have a hurtful bone in his body, and it is very important to him that he create honest and healthy relationships with people. When we worked together on parish projects I could count on his hard work, friendly attitude and reliability.

When Joseph first told me of the charges made against him, I was shocked and sorrowful. We had many confidential conversations and he honestly and forthrightly laid out the charges and his actions. He invited me to talk with his parents, read the court documents and fully know the situation. If I may give my insights into his actions, I will say that he never intended to hurt, harm or coerce any person into any negative, harmful or illegal action. While Joseph deals exceptionally well with adults over the age of 30 or 40, with people his own age he is diffident and shy. We talked about his difficulty in forming a relationship with a girl his own age. I truly believe that it was only loneliness and a desire to form a healthy and close relationship with a girl his own age that he turned to internet encounters.

I am a priest, and am now and was then in charge of a church full of families and children, and so am constantly on guard against any danger or warning signs of abuse

or inappropriate behavior. I never once have been concerned that Joseph is or was in any way a danger to any person, of any gender or age. His dealings with people are uniformly kind, respectful and generous of spirit.

Since Joseph first was charged he has come to me for spiritual support and advice. We have talked about his actions, where he misjudged, and entered into behaviors that are wrong. I truly believe, that despite his missteps, he in no way had any intention to harm anyone. Joseph is a young man who has erred, and he knows it. He is also a man of integrity who wants to be a hard-working, valuable and contributing member of his community. Sending him to jail, or placing such restrictions that it would be difficult or impossible for him to continue his promising career would only hurt our society. I believe that he has great potential as a valuable employee and member of the community. He has shown that in his work and volunteer efforts he puts forth his best effort—to do his job, to learn and grow and to develop new talents and skills. Jail time would only cease his growth and ability to continue contribute to our society. Being publicly marked as an offender would only stifle opportunities for work, learning and contribution. The events and restrictions of the past year have brought about change and growth in Joseph. He has faced his actions and their consequences head on. He has learned the importance of addressing challenges directly and seeking help and guidance when he needs it. I am confident that he will continue in this path of positive momentum and maturity if he is allowed to step out into the world, take on the challenges of a fulfilling career and engage in the life of the community.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Bonnie F. Morris
Rector
St. James Episcopal Church
405 E. Main Street
Batavia, NY 14020

Home address:
38 Wardman Road
Kenmore, NY 14217
bjfmmorris@gmail.com
(716) 510-2091

Patricia Miller
8012 Southwester Blvd
Evans, NY 14003
February 6, 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo
United States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honorable Judge Vilardo,

My name is Patricia Miller and I am writing this letter on behalf of Joseph Kurowski, who is my nephew and Godchild. I know Joseph has pleaded guilty for possession of child pornography and that this is his first offense.

I was shocked and at a loss for words when Joseph told me what he had done as this is uncharacteristic of him. Joseph and I have formed a close bond over the past 24 years. He knows that he can talk to me about anything and everything, that I will always love and support him. We come from a large, tight knit family. We gather for holidays, birthdays, Sunday dinner, pool parties, and game nights. We even vacation together. I have always found him to be loving, caring, and lighthearted. As he was growing up he was very mature for his age. He was shy yet comfortable around people of all ages. He has always shown deep love and loyalty for his friends and family. He has a knack for lifting our spirits up and making us happy.

I can remember the first heart to heart conversation that Joseph and I had. It was right after 9/11. He was young but he knew something "really bad" happened. He wasn't scared, he just wanted to know if everything was going to be alright and that his family was safe. Since that time I have always seen how much he cares for his loved ones.

I also remember talking with him when he reached his teenage years. I shared with him stories about my own experiences. The rollercoaster of emotions and feelings. The wanting of more freedom and privacy and how I felt if I didn't get that. About wanting to spend more time with friends. How school activities leave less time for family. How getting a job takes more time away, especially when having to work on holidays or during other family gatherings and vacations. As I watched him go thru these stages, I saw that he still put family first. He has two younger brothers who look up to him and love him. He has always made time for them.

He enjoyed school and kept good grades but he never seemed to have many friends. In high school he became active in the music department, joining the choir and band. Here he finally felt that he "fit in." Music and singing was always a spark for Joseph. It has been all his life. I remember how excited he was when I taught him to play Kum Ba Yah on the guitar so that he could sing and play this for his grandmother around the campfire, a time honored tradition in our family. We even made up a singing game for around the campfire. He also loved singing in the car on road trips. This was a way he could open up and he started making friends. I noticed that he was very loyal to his friends. He was unselfish, most times putting someone else's needs

before his own. He had a willingness to help others. He often times helped me with my horses. While doing chores it gave us time to talk. I could also depend on him every summer to help stack hay. He graduated from high school in 2011 and was accepted into The University at Buffalo.

Everyone's life has its ups and downs. Unfortunately, a lot of the downs happened around the same time for him. Life was stressful and chaotic. Everyone was caught up in their own troubles and trying times. Then my Mother, his grandmother, became very ill. My family devoted most of our time training to do dialysis at home to take care of her. As her condition worsened, we spent a lot of time in and out of the hospital. Eventually she was admitted to a rehab/nursing home but still required the majority of our time. My mothers death was like an implosion, it not only broke our hearts but our will too. We seemed to go thru the motions of the funeral and then shut down. During his college years, Joseph was having problems too, we communicated less often but I know he had been having a hard time staying awake, even while driving. He was finding it difficult and stressful adjusting to college. He eventually was diagnosed with narcolepsy. He only occasionally would tell somebody this. I think he didn't want to burden his family. He would suffer in silence but put on a brave face for family and friends. He was a rock for his (paternal) Grandmother. He would surprise his (maternal) Grandmother for a visit or dinner when she became very ill. Joseph always felt better by helping others. He was very close to his grandmother and felt a huge void in his life when she died.

He has had some high points too. He changed his major in college to Music as he was struggling with computer science. He once again found himself thru music. He was meeting people who loved the same things he did and made a few friends again. He started going to church and sang in their choir. He graduated with a Bachelors Degree and though he hasn't found a job in that field, he did get hired at Geico shortly after graduation. He seem excited when he talked about his job and became very ambitious to succeed. He worked hard, took classes to improve at sales. He was even working a lot of overtime. He was talking about his future. He was able to start paying off his debts, his student loans and his car. He even talked to me about moving out on his own.

The one thing missing in his life seemed to be having someone that is always there for him. As I told him in his teenage years, when you start working it takes time away from your family and friends. He then started using the Internet as a way to meet people. He struggled with this as he wasn't getting the attention he thought he would. When there was no peaked interests thru conventional dating sites, he started using alternative adult apps to chat and meet people. This led to a multitude of people to talk to which is what he so desperately wanted. It felt good to be on the receiving end of the attention too. All this then led him into the danger of inappropriate exchanges.

I have had lengthy conversations with Joseph since the charges have been brought against him. After it first happened, I saw him angry at the world. He wanted to deflect the guilt, not admit that he had done anything wrong. He is angry that he lost his job, and with that his lively hood. That he lost his way of communicating with the people he thought were friends. He can't contact with people by text or calling. He cried all the time whenever we talked. I told him he will always feel that way, that awful, if he doesn't accept responsibility for his own actions. I think it's a hard thing to do, to look inward and find, and then admit guilt. He knows that what he did was wrong. Gradually his whole demeanor has changed. I know he is going to counseling

and has been on medication that helps him act more rational and even tempered. He has good days and bad days, but the good are slowly outnumbering the bad. He accepts responsibility for his actions. When we have talked he is remorseful, he knows his actions were wrong and he is sorry for what he is putting his family through. He feels he has disappointed everyone, but when he spoke of this it was with humility and not feeling sorry for himself or expecting others to feel sorry for him. He knows he has a long road to redemption, with his family and friends and most importantly with himself.

I wrote this letter with the hope and intention of showing you the person Joseph is and how much he means to many people. Joseph is missed dearly. I miss having our family whole again. I know other family members feel the same way. We feel we gain strength in numbers. Joseph has my full support, and I will help him anyway possible to regain his positive attitude and to continue the path he had set to contribute to society in a positive way.

Sincerely,

Patricia Miller

A letter on behalf of Joseph Kurowski

With regard to the federal court and Judge Lawrence Vilardo, I understand that Joseph Kurowski has pleaded guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. This is his first offense and came as an absolute shock to us all. He has always been cautious to never offend or hurt anyone; the news of this offense was a startling surprise.

I have known Joseph since the fall of 2012. We met at the University at Buffalo in our music theory classes. We have been very close for the last four years and even after graduating together in 2015, we still have made an effort to see each other at least twice a month. We have been through a lot together and he has always been very considerate. During the spring semester of 2014 we sang the alma mater for the University at Buffalo School of Engineering Commencement. During the months preceding we spent many hours rehearsing the three part arrangement with our friend John Podvedsco. All throughout our rehearsals he supported us and shared all of the advice he had to make us sound better. He himself was very open to the singing advice we gave him.

I remember for my 21st birthday I didn't have much planned. So Joe surprised me and treated me out to Applebee's for lunch. No one else made me feel as special that day as he did. It was so selfless of him to take the time to treat me out to lunch even when he had homework, and a job to go to after school.

Just before we graduated from college Joe had gotten a position working sales for Geico. He was very proud of his job and often expressed how he wanted to help get me and the rest of our circle of friends a job there. I politely declined. As Joe always does, he set his goals high at Geico. He was planning on being top of his sales team, and it wasn't long until he had pretty much achieved his goal only a few months after being employed. He always talked about how he could improve his position and become better; he was taking sales classes to maximize his output. He was working overtime almost every single weekend and was one of the hardest working people I knew. He was already well on his way to pay for his student loans and his car.

As I stated earlier, Joe has always been very driven by talking to other about their problems, but there were many times that he would hold back from talking about his own because it made him feel like he was putting a burden on his friends. But in 2015, I was asked by him to sing for his grandmother's funeral. Being a singer, he was already going to sing "Ave Maria" for her funeral, but he asked me to come in case he couldn't get through the song. When the morning of the funeral came, he toughed it out and went up to sing for his grandma. I must admit that I never saw Joe so hurt in his life. Many tears were on his face after he had finished the song.

His grandma's death really hurt him and this was clearly evident in the way he spoke of her. The weeks and months passed and I was very busy with school and my job and didn't have much time to even respond to the texts he was sending me. He needed someone to talk to, but I felt I was too busy at the time. I notice that on the occasions when I saw Joe, he would talk about some of the people he had met while talking online. Because our visits became less frequent he began to use all sorts of chat apps

to help him at least talk to somebody about his sad experience. It may not have been someone he knew, but at least it was *somebody*. This led to accidental contact with minors using the app.

Joe's arrest in April of 2016 obliterated all of his hopes of climbing the ladder of success that he had carefully set out to conquer. His former employer, Geico, suspended his permission to come to work and eventually no longer regarded him as an employee. Since his internet communications were confiscated, he ended up showing up at the wrong time to his final exam for his sales classes and the Professor threatened to fail him.

After Joe was arrested he was cut off from being able to communicate with us, which torn him apart. He had always thrived on being able to help others through their problems while seeking advice to help him through his struggles. But it was very apparent that Joe's offense made him hate himself for a time. He struggled to smile when his friends came to visit and play board games with him. This was far from his nature. Over time Joe has slowly become a bit more positive. Now the only aspect of his life that was more greatly damaged by his conviction than his living condition was his positive attitude that motivated him to be such a hard worker. He really has always been there for me through my own struggles, and I wish there was a way for me to help him with this one.

The purpose of justice is to bring punishment to the guilty until they are ready to change their ways and are no longer a threat to society. I simply hope that after considering the perspective that I bring in this letter that you see that Joseph Kurowski, although not innocent, has been changed greatly by the guilt that he has borne these past nine months. I leave the decision into your just hands, praying that no man receive a punishment unfitting for his crime.

With kind regards,

James P. Bobak

Honorable Lawrence J Vilardo
United /States District Judge
Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, NY 14202

Your Honor:

My name is Richard S Kurowski Jr, I am writing this letter about my nephew Joseph Kurowski. I understand that Joey has pleaded guilty of possession of child pornography. What I think is important about Joey is that I have known him since birth. Joey and I have built a relationship not seen between many uncles and nephews in today's society. We have spent countless hours playing sports, playing video games and spending weekends, holidays etc. together, being under control and not going to events where he could have gotten in trouble.

I have a 13 year old daughter named Torrie. Torrie spent many of days with Joey, having a good time. Joey spent his time on weekends, holidays etc. coming over to my mother's house to watch Torrie. My daughter could not wait to see him as he always took the time when she was growing up to teach her and include her into whatever activities were going on. This was a challenge as my daughter is very shy and would not do these things if it were not for Joey pushing her to participate. Joey went on many family vacations with us as he is a great person to watch my daughter so my wife and I could have some time to ourselves. The joy that it gave me during my daughter's years growing up seeing her have someone else besides myself looking after my little girl, words cannot express. Joey was at my mother's house the weekend when my daughter was broken from her pacifier and cried for days, did Joey give up? No, he did not and was there during all the crying and fussing that goes with a young girl losing her pacifier, they made it through the weekend and my daughter, even though she was young, knew that Joey was there for her. I could go on forever about what Joey has done for my daughter but the last thing I want to say is that Joey and Torrie will remain friends after all this is through. If all parents could even say what I said about their children or cousins this would be a great world.

My mother, myself and Joey would spend every other weekend together and go out to the mall and go out for dinner. During the last year, we have not been able to do any of this because what has been going on. It has left a big hole in our life as one important family member is missing. Think about this, a nephew/grandchild spending time with uncle/grandmother instead of parading around on the streets causing damage and mayhem as you see happening today, almost every night.

Last thing I would like to talk about is the hardship that this mistake has caused Joey. He has lost his job, and he is struggling to find a new one. Joey has student loans, a car payment and eventually will need to get his feet back on the ground. I would like to say I have been a good role model for Joey, being there for him and helping him out when needed. I am a soccer coach today, in the past I have volunteered in many ways to coach today's kids. I have helped many needy families, boys and girl's clubs etc. by doing volunteer work through my job, so I feel my character reference is strong.

Before I end this letter, I would like to say that I will be there for Joey and help him the best I can. I promised him that when he graduated from college that I would take him to LasVegas, I am still looking forward to that day.

Thank you,

Richard S Kurowski Jr
2/16/2017

7 February 2017

Honorable Lawrence J. Vilardo

United States District Judge

Robert H. Jackson United States Courthouse

2 Niagara Square

Buffalo, N.Y. 14202

Your Honor,

I understand that Joseph Kurowski has pleaded guilty to the charge of possession of child pornography. This is his first offense and I was absolutely shocked to hear of this charge. I voluntarily provide a character reference on his behalf.

My name is Kathryn Cardona, I have been married for 19 1/2 years. I have three children, one adult stepson, and I work part time as a Physical Therapist with Kaleida Health. I am Joseph's aunt (his mother's sister) and I have known Joseph all his life. We currently live less than four miles apart. All throughout his childhood I would see Joseph every Sunday. After attending mass together we would gather at his parents' house, his grandmothers or occasionally at my home. His mother, grandmother, Joseph and I would take walks together at the local park trails and I would take him to the playground. He is like a son to me. Even when I began having my own children, Joseph and I remained close and I do not intend to let that change. He has a great relationship with my children as we used to have regular family gatherings. We would play board games together or do seasonal activities such as sledding in the winter, swimming and camping in the summer. Even as he became involved more in high school he would still find time for family. During his college years and when he worked he would come straight home to join the family gatherings.

These family gatherings have stopped since his offence and this has been a hardship on Joseph. In fact, it has affected the entire extended family. My children miss their cousins and the family gatherings. Joseph was also involved in music ministry with his church. In 2015 he sang at his grandmothers' funeral and he was supposed to sing at his cousins wedding in 2016 however due to this charge he was not even able to attend. Another hardship he had to face was leaving his job with Geico. He was very proud of the progress he was making at this company and was moving up the ladder.

As I have mentioned, Joseph and I are close and I am blessed to be able to continue to visit him on a weekly basis during the day while my children are in school. During these visits we talk, play board games and cook or bake. He shares his concerns for his future and we discuss possibilities. He tells me he is doing a self-study with printed material provided to him from a friend. I encourage him to continue to try to better himself through self-study and prayer.

Joseph worked full time and he spent time with family. He has never been the type of person to do anything that would cause significant disappointment to himself or his family. He has not been previously involved in the possession of child pornography nor do I believe that he intentionally gained possession of child pornography. I believe this was a terrible mistake and he has learned from this mistake. Joseph has always been more comfortable interacting with people he already knows, whether they be from school, church, work, or family. I think social media allowed him to talk to different people without having to interact on a personal level (face to face). From the discussions we have had I feel he has learned a great deal from this experience. He has requested that I speak with my children (ages 16, 14 and 8) of the hidden consequences that arise when using social media. He is a good person who is distressed by his current circumstances but he is trying to better himself and prepare for a successful future. I stand behind Joseph and will continue to provide support and guidance. I truly believe he can once again be a valuable member to society.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Cardona